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ABSTRACT

An ethnographic study examined the culture of the Chinese students and scholars in America with a specific focus on their experiences in the cultural adaptation process. Subjects were three Chinese nationals (one female and two males) living in the area of a large midwestern university. Subjects were interviewed for about an hour each, with questions based on elements appearing in adaptation models from Y. Y. Kim (between the years of 1977 and 1988) regarding intercultural adaptation of immigrants. The analysis focused on issues such as the most important factor in the adaptation process, most significant experiences (positive or negative), the effect of mass media as compared to actual interpersonal interactions in the process, realization of differences and similarities in the two cultures, and suggestions they can offer for newcomer students. They were also asked to rate how well they think they have adapted. Results indicated that all three interviewees appeared very positive about their experiences in America. College students must pass highly competitive exams in the English language as well as in their respective academic areas, and they also have high regard and very positive attitudes toward America. Findings suggest that many do not intend to return to China in the near future, so they are highly motivated to become acculturated in this country. This factor, along with their intellectual preparedness contributes most to their cultural adaptation. (Contains 18 references; 3 tables of data are appended.) (CR)

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CHINESE STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS IN THE U.S.:

AN INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION PROCESS

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RUNNING HEAD: CULTURAL ADAPTATION

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CHINESE STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS IN THE U.S.: AN INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION PROCESS

Introduction

It has been reported that the number of international students in the United States is increasing rapidly during the recent years. Among these international students, perhaps the one group that has been expanding the fastest is that from the People's Republic of China. Due to the open door policy in the PRC since the late 1970s, especially, since the 1980s, the Chinese government has been more willing to allow students to study abroad. For most Chinese students, the United States is their first choice.

Typically, Chinese students come to the U.S. as international students bearing a F-1 visa. A good number of them are married and have their spouses, sometimes, children live with them while they study, typically at the graduate and post graduate level. The majority of Chinese students come with college degrees, many with master's degrees; some with working experiences. This means that they are typically older than the traditional American students. It also indicates that they have generally completed their enculturation and socialization processes in China.

Almost immediately after they arrive at their designated location in the U.S., they must learn to deal with the drastic changes in all respects from their home country. They must adjust to the weather, the food, and learn a variety of skills from handling various paper documents to following government procedures; from using ATM machines to buying and driving a car. At the same time, they must adjust to an unfamiliar education system which is very much different from that in China. They need to learn how to register for classes, how to utilize the advisory facilities, and how to cope with the many different situations on campus related to their research or teaching assistantships which most of them have. All of the above are additional tasks beyond their primarily endeavor--to study.

As the number of Chinese students in this country is still increasing rapidly, it seems necessary and meaningful to explore their experiences during their adaptation process. This study, therefore, is an effort attempted to understand the adaptation process of Chinese students and scholars in this country. My general research questions are: (a) What do Chinese students and scholars experience during their adaptation process to the U.S. culture? (b) What seems to be the important factors that affect such process? Hopefully, some of their accounts may help us

realize what can be done in such processes, while their experiences may help new students in their adaptation.

Literature

Because of the differences between China and the U.S. which belong to two larger cultures--the eastern and the western cultures (Hall, 1977)--Chinese students face enormous adjustments when they move to the U.S. In recent years, intercultural communication research has focused much of its attention on examining the differences and similarities between eastern and western cultures.

Two of the most important dimensions with which we look at cultural differences are (a) high- versus low-context cultures, and (b) collectivistic versus individualistic cultures. According to Hall (1977), a high-context culture is one in which meanings are communicated relying less on linguistic codes (i.e., verbal messages); whereas in a low-context culture, there is a heavy dependence on verbal messages on getting meanings across. This concept is viewed, however, not as polarized ends, but rather, on a continuum. Most eastern cultures (e.g., China, Korea, and Japan) are categorized as toward the higher end of the continuum, and the United States stands toward the lower end of the measure (Hall, 1977). Based on this assumption, Americans

tend to express their ideas and feelings more explicitly while most Chinese have a more implicit style in communication.

The other widely used dimension in intercultural communication studies is collectivistic versus individualistic cultures. Gudykunst (1991) reviewed that in collectivistic cultures, "people belong to ingroups or collectivities which are supposed to look after them in exchange for loyalty," while in individualistic cultures, "people are supposed to look after themselves and their immediate family only" (Hofstede & Bond, 1984, p. 419). Similar to high- and low-context cultures, Gudykunst (1991) asserted that "individualistic and collectivistic tendencies exist in all cultures, but one tends to predominate" (p. 47).

A collectivistic culture tends to encourage group-thinking. Individuals tend to be more people-oriented (i.e., place emphasis on relational issues and stress contextual dimensions) and more cooperative. Harmony is of the utmost importance over anything else. On the other hand, people in an individualistic culture tend to value independence very much and are mostly task-oriented. Success is valued at all cost. Getting the job done is sometimes more important than maintaining a good relationship (Dodd, 1991). Generally, China is identified as a

collectivistic culture whereas the U.S. is believed to be typically individualistic.

Although Chinese international students in this country are not representative of the entire population in China, they have typically completed their enculturation process (when one learns about and embraces his/her native culture) in China and bear characteristics of Chinese people. They are not a group of average Chinese because they probably represent the most educated group of Chinese intellectuals. As well, they are to be distinguished from early Chinese immigrants to the U.S.

The group under study is one of "elite" Chinese nationals who are well educated and are spreaded in higher education institutions throughout the United States. The U.S. represents an ideal society for them: a democratic country with high living and academic standards. Unlike early immigrants from China who came for economic reasons and focused survival, most members of this group have prior general knowledge about the language and culture of the U.S. They came well-prepared intellectually.

However, as Chen (1994) asserted, "to know is never to experience" (p. 125). Although they have learned many facts about the U.S. before they ever set foot on this land, it is not until they actually experience the life here that they begin to understand what it is like to live in this culture.

The cultural adaptation process has been studied in various forms. In Kim and Gudykunst's (1987) book on intercultural adaptation of immigrants, adaptation came up as similar to terms such as acculturation, assimilation, and adjustment of the immigrant into a different culture. Kim (1988) defined that intercultural adaptation is "the process of change over time that takes place within individuals who have completed their primary socialization process in one culture and then come into continuous, prolonged first-hand contact with a new and unfamiliar culture" (p. 38). Many factors come into play in such a complex process and these factors affect the result of one's intercultural adaptation.

Yum (1987) argued that studies on intergroup/intercultural communication have been conducted by sociologists and anthropologists using primarily quantitative demographic variables to explain adaptation effectiveness. In the intercultural communication field, many studies have been published by scholars exploring the variables and theorizing the process (e.g., Kim, 1977; 1987; 1988; Kim & Gudykunst, 1987). Recent publications have demonstrated a growing interest in qualitative research on intercultural adaptation (Gonzalez, Houston, & Chen, 1993; Gudykunst & Kim, 1984). Chen's (1994)

study on the sense-making process of Chinese students in the U.S., in particular, has inspired this study.

Method

This study may be categorized as an ethnographic study. According to Emerson (1983), ethnography is a "fieldwork committed to describing the social and cultural worlds of a particular group" (p. 19). I have come to this country as an international student from the People's Republic of China since 1986. In the past 10 years, I have known many Chinese nationals studying and working in the United States. I have also talked and interacted with them on daily basis and am familiar with their lives. Although most of my contacts with them were not intended for this particular study, my observations and interactions helped me interpret and understand their experiences with an insider's perspective (an emic approach). The purpose of this study is to describe the culture of the Chinese students and scholars in the U.S. with a specific focus on their experiences in the cultural adaptation process.

Emerson (1983) asserted that one standard way to establish credibility of ethnographers in their descriptions "is to emphasize the fieldworker's closeness to and familiarity with the life and culture under study" (p. 105). I have not only been close to and familiar with the Chinese students and scholars, but

also am one of them myself for over 10 years. However, having such an emic approach can only assist me in my interpretation of other Chinese's experiences instead of allowing me to speak for them. The major part of the information in this study comes from interviews with three Chinese students and scholars which I have conducted during Spring 1994.

Glene and Peshkin (1992) maintained that four steps are important in interviewing: (a) develop a clearly defined topic; (b) design questions that fit the topic; (c) ask the questions with consummate skills; and (d) have ample time to "pitch" the questions to forthcoming, available, and knowledgeable respondents (p. 63). Following these guidelines, I have chosen the topic of adaptation to concentrate on and adopted variables appeared in Kim's series of models (Kim, 1977; 1987; & 1988). These variables include language competency, communication motives and interpersonal communication skills (i.e., verbal and nonverbal expressiveness) in intercultural communication, mass media consumption, personality traits, background knowledge of the host culture, etc. Interview questions are phrased based on these issues.

Glene and Peshkin (1992) further asserted that "questions may emerge in the course of interviewing and may be added to or replace the preestablished ones" and according to them, "this

process of question formation is more likely and the more ideal one in qualitative inquiry" (p. 64). I have added questions after the first interview and rearranged the order of questions to allow a natural flow of the interviews. Also, I have included probing questions and statements which stimulated additional discussions on certain points.

Gudykunst and Schmidt (1988) pointed out that most studies of language and ethnic identity do not allow participants to choose the language in which they want to be interviewed. Considering that my interviewees, at least two of the three, are not very fluent in English and preferred to use Chinese, I have conducted all interviews in Chinese and later translated into English. Authorizations were obtained after I showed them the transcriptions and translations. Each of them have signed the transcriptions and translations and acknowledged that they are accurate documents of the interviews.

Data Collection

My interviewees are three Chinese nationals living in the area of a large mid-west university, two males and one female. Mr. A is a graduate student working on his master's degree. He had been in this country for about eight months at the time of the interview. Mr. B had been here for over seven years. He has earned his Ph.D degree and is presently working for a local

company. Finally, Ms. C is currently a student working on her master's degree. She came to live with her husband who is working on his doctoral degree and later, was able to enroll in a master's program and has been attending classes since. She has been in this country for about three years. Mr. A is single and both Mr. B and Ms. C are married (please also see Appendix A for their personal information).

There are a few reasons for me to select these three interviewees. First, they each have a different length of staying in the U.S., which provide the different perceptions at various physical stage of the adaptation process. According to Dodd (1991), the longer a person lives in a country, the more acculturated he/she is. This is supported by Chen (1994) who examined the sense-making process of Chinese students and scholars and concluded that the more people make sense of their experiences in the adaptation process over the years, the less surprises they will have, the less they feel as strangers.

Also, my interviewees are typical of Chinese students and scholars in the U.S. in terms of age. Two master students and one Ph.D with one working and one student wife (holding F-2 visa). This variety of status represents a relatively full picture of the life of Chinese students and scholars.

To begin my project, I contacted each of my interviewees two weeks before I asked them to participate in this project. I briefly explained to them the nature of the project and asked that they take part in it. After explaining what they need to do (i.e., let me interview them for about an hour each), they all showed interest in the project and agreed to participate. The dates and times for the actual interviews were set. All interviewees were very cooperative during the interviews.

Most of the questions I used for the interviews were based on elements that appeared in several of Kim's adaptation models between the years of 1977 and 1988. A list of the questions that I asked can be found in Appendix B. Kim argued that these factors have impacts on a persons adaptation process.

After carefully thought through the issues, I structured the questions to obtain the most information from my interviewees. Some adjustments and amendments were made once I started interviewing. Some probing questions were included in order to clarify certain points and seek explanations of the points made by the interviewees.

Analysis

Glene and Peshkin (1992) defined that "Data analysis, . . . is the prelude to sensitive, comprehensive outcomes that make connections, identify patterns, and contribute to greater

understanding" (p. 146). As mentioned above, being a Chinese student in the U.S. entitled me the convenience of making observations, relating my own experiences, and use them in the sense-making process of the data.

My analysis focuses on a few major questions that I asked. These questions touch on issues such as the most important factor in the adaptation process, most significant experiences--positive or negative, the effect of mass media as compared to actual interpersonal interactions in the process, realization of differences and similarities in the two cultures, suggestions they can offer for newcoming students, and finally, I asked them to rate how well they think that they have adapted into this culture. The reason for the last question is that I wanted to see whether their own perception influenced their opinions and the presentation of them. A person who has smooth transitions may have positive attitudes toward the adaptation process whereas one who had difficulties and rough times may be more negative.

My opening question with the first interviewee, Mr. A, was a general one: what is the most important factor in the adaptation process? The response was that "language barrier" is the most important. Knowing that my focus on the research is communication, he quickly added that because of this barrier, sometimes he tends to avoid speaking with others. Although,

according to Mr. A, most Chinese students come prepared with written and reading skills, many did not receive systematic training in speaking. He stressed that not being able to express what he means, not understanding or misunderstanding others "made me feel unintelligent, or stupid sometimes." To him, this was the biggest frustration.

Although I did not ask the question specifically, one issue seemed to come up naturally: Chinese students' attitude toward Americans. This is overly positive across all three interviewees. They all expressed that they are content with how Americans in general treat them. In many cases, Americans have been very helpful in both their daily and academic lives.

Mr. B thinks that "Americans are very friendly and helpful." Mr. A stated "I feel that most Americans are very outgoing, enthusiastic, and friendly. If you can express yourself clearly, they will not discriminate you." On the other hand, he feels that "Americans' enthusiasm is mostly superficial. But I think it's enough for me. All I need is to get by. At least they make me feel OK. I mean, at least they don't look down on me." When I probed about knowing that Americans' kindness is superficial, what if they really look down on you? His response was, "I don't care if they really look down on me. All I need is that they are nice on the surface. I mean, face value." (I later realized

that he thought adaptation is merely to get by. He came to study which he did without any problems, therefore, he is content.)

This seems to coincide with Mr. B's another statement about not having high expectations. If you don't expect people to be certain ways, then when they turn out to be nice to you, you would only appreciate it. It is better than the other way around that you are left disappointed. One of Mr. B's suggestions is to not have unrealistically high expectations of life in general in the host country. As a student from China, one should anticipate inconvenience, some minor cultural shocks, and difficulties. He attested that because of this psychological preparation, he was able to adjust to a different language environment with no major problems. Although he also had difficulties in the language, he was able to get by with no devastating feelings. In fact, when I asked him to provide a specific example where a misunderstanding occurred due to language barriers, he could not think of one. His justification was that probably there were times where misunderstandings occurred, but because of his anticipation, he did not let them bother him and therefore, ignored or forgot about them. He mentioned that watching television helped him practise English at the beginning.

As far as how mass media help in the adaptation process, or more generally, in learning about the American culture, responses

are positive. Specifically, Mr. A made the point that compared with actual interpersonal interactions, media gives him a broader knowledge base while interpersonal interactions lets him see the deeper characteristics of Americans. In addition, he said "I think watching TV helps a lot in learning the language. But if I want to learn about the culture, it's not enough." "I think the real culture is the people. Through having friendships for a period of time, I can learn about their culture." He summarized that "I think media gives me breadth and interpersonal interactions gives me depth."

This opinion was echoed by Mr. B as well. He expressed that watching television helps him gain background knowledge so that he has common language, or rather, common topics (e.g., sports) to talk about with his American friends and colleagues. Although he stated that watching TV not only helps in learning the language but also about the culture, it only gives him the broad background. Meanwhile, interpersonal interactions are narrow and limited to friends and colleagues, but nevertheless are very important because friends "can give me real help."

These statements supported Kim's (1987) assertion about mass media's effects in the adaptation process of immigrants. Basically, she argued that while mass media may be helpful in acquiring information or knowledge about the host culture, it is

not until one experiences face-to-face interactions with the hosts, can he/she learn about the culture, and further adapt to it. This seems to get at the point that no matter how long or how much a person is prepared with knowledge of a host culture, a certain period of time is always required to allow interactions with the hosts in order to undergo the acculturation process.

Furthermore, no matter how one is equipped with knowledge of the host culture, once he/she is in a different culture, there seems to be the unavoidable period of "cultural shock." Dodd (1991) also maintained that sojourners and immigrants experience typical stages during the cultural shock period. The four stages are: (a) "eager expectation stage" where a person prepares his/herself by learning (mostly through media) about the host culture and plan for the new life with much excitement; (b) "everything is beautiful stage" in which the person first arrived in the new country, everything is new and fresh and he/she is happy to have made the decision to come to this culture. This is usually followed by high expectations and eagerness to do things until; (c) "everything is awful stage" is "marked by a loss of social cues and a time of inconvenience that you have not experienced earlier. The confusion heightens with the unfamiliar smells, sounds, food, and cultural customs. Not only do some of the physical symptoms set in at this stage, but depression" (p.

307); and people will then begin to struggle and try to balance the good and bad things they perceive about the new culture and make adjustments to the new culture. This will lead to (d) "everything is OK stage" where after a period of time in the new culture, one has learned a lot more about the culture and view both the positive and the negative in a balanced manner, and is able to accept the culture as it is (Dodd, 1991, pp. 310-318).

I did not give or ask the interviewees to identify these stages because I wanted to see whether they would come up from the responses. Although they did not emerge during the interviews, when I provided these stages at the end of each session, all interviewees agreed with these stages.

Based on Kim's (1988) theory, this process goes on with higher ups and lower downs at the beginning, gradually moves to more moderate ups and downs (things are not so good or bad as the beginning), and finally comes to a relatively stable line. This process is ongoing until the adaptation process is stable which symbolizes a perfect adaptation. However, the chance for a perfect, 100 percent adaptation to happen is almost zero. As Mr. B pointed out in his evaluation about his own adaptation, we can only approach perfection, but a perfect adaptation is not realistic.

Although Mr. B stated that he has experienced only minor shocks from the very beginning and that no major problems have occurred, he rated himself as 80 percent adapted to this culture. When asked to give explanation, he said he thinks that 80 percent is above average (he considers average to be 50 percent) and he is satisfied with his adaptation result at this time. There are things that are simply deep seeded in the cultural heritage that one may never learn all about them. He gave an example to demonstrate this point. A colleague of his once used a phrase which appeared in a television cartoon program 15 years ago in this country and it caught him totally confused until the colleague explained it. He accepts that there is no way he will be able to understand all about this culture and he does not expect to.

However, Mr. B is optimistic that as time goes by, he is expected to pick up more and more about the culture and approach 90 percent adaptation. Meanwhile, he is fully aware that it gets more and more difficult from this point on and that never does he believe that he can achieve 100 percent, a perfect adaptation.

This very awareness of the degree of difficulty in adaptation process and awareness of the difference in cultures are in agreement among all three interviewees. When asked to rate his degree of adaptation, Mr. A began with 100 percent. I

was surprised and asked him to explain his rating. He said that he is totally satisfied with his experiences so far and that he came here to study and he has been able to do exactly what he wanted. But when I stressed that adaptation is a lifetime process that involves much more than just study, he changed quickly to 80 percent, then 70, 60, and finally, he said, "probably 50 percent."

Ms. C rated herself as 50 percent adapted. When I asked whether she was being modest in her rating (which is a quality of Chinese women), she said she almost wanted to say 40 percent. The reason is that she has been dependent upon her husband on most matters and that if she was to go out and deal with everything by herself, she said "I'd be dead." Her husband happened to be present when we were on this issue and he attested that he has been taking care of most matters, if not all, beyond the household. Ms. C believes that at the present time, living and studying is easy, but going into the American culture is another stage that she is yet to prepare herself to face.

It should be noted that one of the reasons for Ms. C's satisfaction and lack of difficulties in life is that she lives in a student housing complex in which the majority of residents are international students and their families, many of them are from China. She has her Chinese friend network and visit them

fairly regularly. According to Ms. C, there is no problem with language, food, etc. in her everyday life.

Also, part of the reason for her satisfaction comes from the fact that her husband was a former president of the Association of Chinese Students and Scholars at the university. With this position, she was able to know more Chinese than most others do and was involved in the planning and organizing of activities for Chinese student often. This gives her a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction that prevents her from feeling lonely and empty as some wives do, from her observation.

When I probed about other wives, Ms. C provided that some of them are unhappy here because they have given up their jobs and normal life in China to pursue their dreams of living in the U.S. only to find that they are to stay at home, cook, and take care of their husband and children. Some of them are well educated and some very talented but what they can do here is very limited. Many of them were successful professionals at home and are now only able to work at Chinese restaurants for minimum wages. Some cannot even do that for lacking English skills. This has become problems for some Chinese wives in the family. Their children generally lack respect for them because they speak poor English and do not bring ample income to the home as their husbands do. Yet, they are the ones to take care of the children and take on

the task of educating the child about China and the Chinese culture. It is a very painful job and bitter experience at home.

While Ms. C is lucky among her type, Mr. A and B have their perceived advantages in their adaptation processes. Mr. A feels that he has learned about the American culture through participation in activities involving local students. He told me that among the Chinese students who came with him, he is the only single person. Not having troubles with housework and study, he has enough time and energy to engage in activities when he is invited by his American classmates. On the other hand, the Chinese students who are married tend to be more involved in their family affairs. Typically, the first thing they need to do is to go through procedures to get their wives and children out of China. Then, they need to help the wives settle down and find them jobs or enroll in classes and take care of their children, etc. They simply do not participate in many activities and are less involved in anything beyond their family and academic life.

As for Mr. B, he thinks that his flexibility in his communication with others has been helpful in his interactions with Americans. Being flexible and realistic in his expectations seems to be a theme in his adaptation. He believes that hardworking is a quality for success that most Chinese students have, but learning the communication skills and being flexible

when dealing with others will make the difference of whether one will succeed or not.

In addition, perhaps due to longer residence in this culture, Mr. B seems to be more aware of the cultural differences than the other two interviewees. The most important factor he thinks will benefit Chinese students and scholars in this culture is that we should learn to be very independent. Do not expect others, especially Americans, to take care of your problems. Rather, learn to cope with things by oneself is crucial because this is an individualistic culture. When in need for help, one must speak up and express his/herself explicitly. Whereas in China, it is encouraged of young people to be hardworking, humble, and quiet (passiveness), one should try to be actively involved in different affairs in this culture. Whenever there is need for something, one has to express him/herself unequivalently instead of implying.

To demonstrate this, he gave an example of his promotion at work. He has been hired as a chief technician in his company. Soon after he started working, he proposed some new ideas to the company to try out and received positive outcomes as a result. He then wanted to move to a management position where he could exert more power and bring about more profits to the company. If he were to follow his Chinese merits, quite possibly, he would

not self-nominate himself. However, knowing the different values in this culture, he went to his boss and asked for the promotion. Pleasantly, he was given the raise and has been working to his fuller potential for more than a year and is very happy about the decision he made. Perhaps this is the ideal, when one is not only aware of the differences but also make use of them to his/her benefits.

This was Mr. B's advice for newcoming students from China. He emphasizes independence and realistic expectations. Also, he suggested that newcoming students should look for the Chinese students organizations for support network. Being a former president of such an organization himself, he believes this is very important at the beginning of the adaptation process.

Mr. A's suggestions centered around self-adjustments. As Mr. B, he stressed the importance of independence. Chinese students should quickly learn to handle daily affairs by themselves, be positive and sensitive to others. He also suggested that it is important to have American friends. Not only can they help with language problems, but it is only when one reaches out, instead of being limited to the Chinese community, can he/she actually learn about the American culture.

Ms. C also emphasized the importance of being involved in a variety of activities. She said making your schedule full will

help eliminate loneliness. Contrary to Mr. A's suggestion, she stressed that one should be close to other Chinese here because they provide a readily available support system.

Please see Appendix C for a chart of general categories emerged from the interviews.

Discussion and Conclusion

In contrast to most previous research which focus mostly on the difficulties of adaptation of immigrants, all three interviewees in this study appeared very positive about their experiences in the United States. I think the most important reason is that this group of Chinese students and scholars are quite different from early immigrants from China. Almost all of them are highly educated before they came to this country and well prepared in terms of cultural knowledge. College students are privileged in China, but not all students in China can come to study abroad. In order for them to come to the U.S., they must pass highly competitive exams in the English language as well as their respective academic areas.

On top of their intellectual abilities, this generation of Chinese have high regards and very positive attitudes toward the United States. The U.S. represents a country that is closest to their dreams. Most of these students and scholars do not intend to return to China in the near future, which indicates that they

are highly motivated to be acculturated in this country. Needless to say, this factor, along with their intellectual preparedness contributes the most to their successful cultural adaptation.

I believe this kind of study will benefit Chinese students in their adaptation processes. Such information will help Chinese students and scholars in this country confirm and analyze their own experiences and advise new students in their forthcoming adaptation process. At the same time, this information may help the host culture and others understand concerns and problems in a cultural adaptation process.

While I feel that being from the group gives me an emic perspective, and therefore, reliability, all analyses do filter through my own frame of references. Future research could employ a larger scale, covering a larger variety of samples. The three interviewees in this study happen to be all very content with their experiences. However, from what I have experienced and observed, things are not always equally smooth for everyone. A different sample may provide other pieces of the puzzle.

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Appendix A

Demographic Information and Time Table for Interviews:

Interviewee	Sex	Age	Maternal Status	Length of stay	Date of interview	Location of interview
A	M	27	single	1/2	3/18/94	My apartment
B	M	31	married	7	3/23/94	His house
C	F	26	married	3	3/25/94	Her apartment

Appendix B

Collective Interview questions (not necessarily in same order in all interviews):

1. How long have you lived in the United States?

2. In the process of adapting to this culture, what do you think is the most important factor to consider in order to be well adapted?

3. (Based on answers from question #2), what specific experiences have you had? positive and negative experiences?

4. How has your knowledge (including language competency) helped you in the adaptation process?

5. How has your desire or motivation to adapt affect your process (having strong motivation versus not very strong, some Chinese tend to stay within the Chinese community)?

6. How has the mass media, compared to actual interpersonal encounters with Americans, affected your adaptation process? Which is best in helping you learn about the new culture and in what aspect is each most helpful?

7. How are your interpersonal communication skills (interpersonal communication competence) helpful in the process?

8. How is the host culture helpful in such process?

9. What advices can you give to newcoming students in order for them to better adjust to this culture?

10. What do you think can the host culture offer to assist Chinese students in that aspect? (This points at host culture competence.)

11. On a 100 percent, how well do you think you have adapted into this culture? Please explain your answers.

* Differences and similarities between Chinese and American cultures emerged in their answers to these questions. Therefore, no questions were asked separately.

Appendix C

Major Categories

	A	B	C
Main Factors	Language	Independence	no-need to adjust
Media vs. Interpersonal Interaction	Media is broad IP is deep	Media provides IP gives real help	Media helps relax
Attitudes of Americans	Friendly, open, willing to help superficial	Friendly, helpful,	Friendly, pleasant
Advice for New Students	Self-adjustment, independent, positive attitude	Realistic expectations, look for Chinese organi-zations	Engage in activities, be close to other Chinese
Self-Rated Adaptation	100% changed to 50%	80%	50% or 40%